



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8

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MAY 18 2015

Ref: 8EP-N

Mr. Richard Mingo
Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission
230 S. 500 East Suite #230
Salt Lake City, Utah 84102

Re: Provo River Delta Restoration Project Final Environmental Impact Statement,
CEQ#20150103

Dear Mr. Mingo:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Provo River Delta Restoration Project developed by the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, the Central Utah Project Completion Act Office of the Department of the Interior, and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, collectively referred to as the Joint Lead Agencies (JLAs). We have completed a review consistent with our responsibilities and authorities under Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

Background

The Provo River Delta Restoration Project supports re-establishment of the June sucker (*Chasmistes liorus*), an endangered fish endemic to Utah Lake, by creating habitat suitable for juveniles. While this project alone has not been designed to remove the species' endangered status, it is an important step given the species' limited distribution. The FEIS has identified Alternative B as the preferred alternative because it minimized the amount of private land necessary for acquisition while still enabling the river to develop an adequately sized delta ecosystem. The EPA supports the project goal to improve habitat for aquatic life, including the June sucker.

EPA Comments and Recommendations

The EPA submitted comments on the Draft EIS on May 7, 2014. We appreciate the steps the JLAs have taken to address those comments as well as the collaboration required among the JLAs to make the project a success. The EPA appreciates the additional information included on the existing channel and the ditches in the project area. We also appreciate that additional studies have been conducted between the Draft and Final EISs and recommend that the JLAs make the Sediment Oxygen Demand (SOD) and feasibility studies available to the public. Both studies are relied upon to help support the JLAs' decision to utilize aeration in the lower Provo River to maintain State water quality standards for dissolved oxygen.

The EPA continues to recommend that a monitoring and adaptive management plan be developed to measure project success and enable mitigation. Ideally the plan will include details on monitored

parameters, monitoring frequency, and how the information obtained will be used. It will also identify thresholds for action and the actions to be taken, as well as incorporate the water quality task force and other mitigation plans.

The EPA appreciates the JLAs' coordination with us and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regarding Clean Water Act Section 404 permitting throughout development of this project. The EPA will continue to coordinate through the Corps as necessary.

Closing

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Provo River Delta Restoration Project FEIS, and thank you for considering our input. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our comments, please feel free to contact either me at 303-312-6704 or Dr. Angelique Diaz of my staff at 303-312-6344 or by email at diaz.angelique@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Philip S. Strobel
Acting Director, NEPA Compliance and Review Program
Office of Ecosystems Protection and Remediation

